





Medical Education

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THE
PRESENT STATE
OF
MEDICAL LEARNING
IN THE
CITY OF NEW-YORK.

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IT has been objected by some, that large cities are very unfavourable to the progress of youth in literary and scientific pursuits. Perhaps there is some force in the objection, as respects the establishment of colleges for the teaching of boys such branches of knowledge as are comprehended in the course of what is commonly called a *liberal education*. Be the fact as it may, there is no need of discussing it here. But though it should be contended that the elegance of VIRGIL, and the correctness of EUCLID, might be best perceived by a student in rural solitude, or a sequestered village, yet there are some departments of learning which thrive best in thick society, and which can be studied to the greatest advantage where great numbers of them dwell together. This is the case with the PROFESSION OF PHYSIC; the great practical schools of which, both *medical* and *chirurgical*, are and must be always found in populous towns and cities.

The reason of this will be evident to all who reflect, that, as both physic and surgery are employed in removing diseases, and restoring sick and wounded bodies to health, that more diseases and unlucky accidents

happen within the circle of individual observation, in a given time, in a large city, than can be expected to occur in any country settlement, or less numerous society. A student, therefore, will have an opportunity of seeing more cases of distempers and wounds, and in greater variety, in populous places, than any where else. But this is not all, for he will also enjoy the advantage of hearing the opinions, and attending the practice, of such professional men as are engaged in imparting instruction as public lecturers, and administering to the infirm as public prescribers.

The great amount of professional business to be done in great cities, invites thither many physicians and surgeons. Some of these possess such a knowledge of their profession, as that, besides making it subservient to private use, they acquire the talent of communicating what they know to others. Whatever of skill and experience, whatever of learning or invention, these public instructors have attained, will therefore be matter of profit and instruction to the student who diligently avails himself of the opportunities which present themselves.

The public institutions in which the branches of medical knowledge are publicly taught in the city of New-York are two, the COLLEGE and the HOSPITAL.

And, I. *Concerning the MEDICAL ESTABLISHMENT
in COLUMBIA COLLEGE.*

A school of physic existed here before the commencement of the revolutionary war in 1775, and a considerable number of students attended the lectures of the professors. The College, which suffered extremely by the distresses of the war, not only had its business wholly interrupted for several years, sustained a loss of its library, museum, and experimental apparatus, by the depredations of the soldiery, and the building itself very much damaged and out of repair; but, in addition

to all this, *underwent a total derangement of its Medical Establishment.* After the peace of 1783, the old professors, separated by death or dispersion, never organized themselves. Some attempts were made, however, by enterprising individuals, to establish, under the sanction or influence of the College, a plan of Medical Instruction. Some progress was made in it, and the utility of such an institution became so apparent, that a project, started by the Members of the Medical Society, and proposed by them to the Trustees of the College, was, in the year 1792, carried into effect, so far as related to the organization of a Medical Establishment in the College. The particulars of that arrangement, and the state of learning under it, as they stood in the year 1794, may be seen in Professor MITCHILL's printed report, submitted to the Regents of the University, and to the Legislature, at that time. Some alterations have occurred, by death, removal, &c. since that publication was made. The general scope and tendency of these has been to effect a more perfect distribution of subjects and matter among the professors, and to favour economy of money and time among the students. This collegiate establishment is called the *Faculty of Physic.* It consists of a Dean and five Professors; to wit, a Professor of Chemistry and Natural History, a Professor of Anatomy and Surgery, a Professor of the Theory and Practice of Physic, a Professor of Midwifery, and a Professor of Materia Medica and Botany.

The Dean is a Medical Trustee of the College, who forms an easy mode of communication between the Faculty and the Trustees: he is Chairman of the Board of Medical Professors; signs their solemn and public acts; summons the members to attend meetings; and, although not a Professor, is one of the examiners of candidates for degrees. At present the Dean of the Faculty is SAMUEL BARD, M. D.

1. Mr. MITCHILL, the Professor of Chemistry, Natural History, &c. adopts the ANTIPHLOGISTIC SYSTEM. In discussing the subjects of his course he proceeds very much after the manner in which they are arranged in the Table of Nomenclature agreed upon by the FRENCH ACADEMICIANS. In this he has made some innovations, as the improving and progressing condition of science seemed to require. The lectures are drawn up and delivered in such a manner, that the examination of each particular substance, involves both its natural and chemical history; a method more perspicuous and agreeable than the arrangement of them under different heads. A Syllabus and a Nomenclature have been published by the Professor, for the information of the students and the public. As the course comprises not only the classification and arrangement of natural bodies, but also treats of a great variety of facts, which form the basis of scientific Medicine, rational and experimental Agriculture, and the application of these fundamental truths, as principles to explain useful Arts and Manufactures, the importance of the Professorship will be readily perceived. The doctrines delivered are substantiated by *experiments*; and the subjects under consideration are elucidated by *specimens*.

This course is an *undergraduate* course for the students of physic, but *not* for the other students of the College. Ordinary students being not required by the statutes to attend it, seldom think it worth their while to do so. The class, therefore, consists chiefly of medical gentlemen. Any other person who wishes to attend the lectures, may have admission upon the most free and liberal terms, without becoming a student on the establishment, or being subjected to the tasks, exercises, and discipline of regular alumni of the College.

2. The Anatomical Chair is filled by Professor WRIGHT POST. He commences with a compendious History of Anatomy, from the earliest ages to the pre-

sent period; after which, the first object is to take a general view of the principal materials of which the body is composed; endeavouring to explain the use of each, and the manner of connection, so as to give a general idea of the animal economy: he then proceeds, with more accuracy, to the more particular branches of anatomy, by first explaining the structure of the different organs, and afterwards investigating their functions. In prosecuting this inquiry, the body is divided into the following systems: 1. The Osseous; 2. Muscular; 3. Vascular; 4. Chylopoetic; 5. Secretory; 6. Nervous; 7. Respiratory; 8. Connecting and Communicating; 9. Defensive; 10. Genital. Under one or other of these heads, every part of the human body may be naturally arranged; and this division is preferred to the one in common use, as being equally expressive and more comprehensive.

The structure and functions of the different organs in their natural state being understood, an attempt is made to explain the changes they undergo by disease. In this investigation, it is not considered sufficient barely to mention the appearances which are exhibited upon dissection, and to explain the manner of their production, which, strictly speaking, would be all that Pathology implies, but also to point out the symptoms which characterise each individual disease, and recommend such treatment as, from experience, has been found most beneficial. This is not all: through all the lectures a constant application of the knowledge acquired in anatomy is kept in view, as conducive to the cure of diseases, especially such as require **MANUEL OPERATION**. So that a course of Anatomy, as taught in Columbia College, has incorporated with it, a system of the **THEORY AND PRACTICE OF SURGERY**.

It may not be uninteresting to some to be informed of the particular advantages which the School of Anatomy in Columbia College affords. The Professor has

been at considerable pains to establish an Anatomical Museum, and for this purpose he has made two visits to Europe; the last expressly to collect anatomical preparations; and what a twelvemonth of labour and industry could obtain, is now exhibited in Columbia College. In this collection, the intimate structure of all the important organs in the body is made manifest and conspicuous; so that where description fails to give clear conceptions, the eye makes up the deficiency, and communicates to the mind a just and accurate knowledge. The advantages of preparations in a course of anatomical lectures are so obvious, that any observations tending to show their utility are quite unnecessary. It is sufficient to add, that without such aid it is impossible for any teacher to convey precise ideas of the structure of the animal body.

3. The Theory and Practice of Physic form one course of lectures, and are taught by W. HAMERSLEY, M. D. The object of these lectures is to describe the different functions of the living body in health, and the changes which they undergo in diseases. In the first part the Professor enters into a general view of natural causes and civil institutions, in so far as they sensibly influence human health: the nature and properties of the different parts of the human system become the next object of his consideration; of these the phænomena of the nervous system in health and disease—the nature and properties of the blood—the functions of circulation and respiration—their connection with the production of animal heat—the formation of the voice, speech, &c.—the digestion of the food—its assimilation into blood—the nature of the perspirable matter, and the properties of other secreted fluids, are particularly discussed and investigated. In the second part he treats of those diseases which most frequently occur, and particularly such as are most incident to the climate of America. The various kinds of febrile diseases, to-

gether with those generally denominated inflammatory, are chiefly the subject of inquiry. In the arrangement of these an attempt is made to class them according to their evident exciting causes, as they arise singly or conjointly from bad air, improper aliment, or perspirable matter retained or absorbed into the system. From this view of the subject he is led to believe, that the causes of these diseases, thus variously applied, may not only explain their variety of effects; but that there exists a similar principle in each of them. He purposely waves the consideration of diseases incident to pregnancy and child-birth, as they more particularly belong to the department of midwifery.

4. *Obstetrics*, of which JOHN R. B. RODGERS, M. D. is Professor, comprehends the Physiology and Pathology of Parturition. The Professor gives an accurate anatomical description of such parts as are necessary to the consideration of his course, and explains the diseases to which these parts are subject, as well as the general diseases of the female system—The varieties of parturition are detailed and exemplified by machinery as well as in practice—The diseases of the child-bed state are accurately treated of, together with the management of women at that time. The last part of the course comprehends not only the diseases to which children are subject *in the month*, but also those which most generally affect them in the first years of their lives. The obstetric course, in short, gives a considerable view of physiology, and takes in a very large range of the practice of physic.

The utility of such a course is obvious to all, and especially serviceable to medical students from the country, who must necessarily be often called on to practise midwifery, and ought to be well acquainted with this necessary branch of education.

5. The lectures on Botany and Materia Medica form
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one course, and are delivered by DAVID HOSACK, M. D. In these lectures the Professor exhibits a general view of the nature and functions of vegetables, with an investigation of the relation they bear to animals in their growth, life, propagation of their species, their diseases, and their component materials, as investigated by chemical analysis. 2dly. He examines the anatomy of the vegetable body, by the dissection of its different parts. 3dly. He considers the nature, properties, and general uses of the different fluids, and other substances of vegetables. This inquiry also comprises a view of the different doctrines which have been advanced upon the circulation of the sap in plants, and the manner in which they receive and convey their nourishment. 4thly. He considers, at some length, the chemical analysis of plants; with a general view of the late discoveries and improvements in the science of chemistry, as far as connected with the theory and principles of vegetation. 5thly. He considers the chemical analysis of the different substances which are employed as the food of plants. This comprehends an inquiry into the nature of soils and manures, and an outline of the most essential doctrines of agriculture. He then proceeds to a botanical description of the different component parts of the vegetable body, as the seed, root, trunk, branches, leaves; and, lastly, the organs of fructification, with an account of the functions of each; comprising a view of the different doctrines upon the propagation, growth, respiration, and sexes of plants. This leads him to an examination of the various systems which have been devised for the arrangement or classification of the vegetable kingdom; more especially those of Tournefort, Gærtner, Jussieu, and Linnaeus; with the improvements lately proposed by Thunberg, Swartz, Gmelin, and Sir William Jones. After having examined these various systems of classification,

he more particularly confines himself to the natural orders of Jussieu, and the sexual system of Linnæus, as best calculated to acquire a knowledge of plants.

The *Materia Medica*, taking the term in its fullest latitude, embraces for its objects all those matters which enter into the medical treatment or cure of diseases; or, in other words, it treats of medicine, of diet, and of regimen. The order in which these several subjects are treated is the following:—1st. All the articles of medicine are distributed into a certain number of classes, according to their effects or operation on the human body; a connection is preserved, as far as the plan pursued will admit, between the classes of medicines and the diseases in which they are chiefly employed. 2^{dly}. The general principles upon which those classes of medicine operate in producing their effects upon the system are explained; and the different theories which have been adopted by different writers, in accounting for their manner of operation, are also detailed. 3^{dly}. The diseases and particular circumstances in which they are severally to be exhibited are pointed out. 4^{thly}. The particular medicines belonging to each class are described—their natural history—the changes or artificial processes they undergo to render them fit for use—the doses or quantities of each to be administered, and other circumstances which may govern their exhibition are explained.

Under the head of *Diet* some general observations are made upon the different kinds of food, together with their effects on the system in health and disease—the influence of general regimen, comprising climate, air, exercise, sleep, cloathing, &c. is also introduced as part of this course of lectures, not only as it belongs to the *Materia Medica*, but more especially as it is intended to call the attention of students to a subject which is too much neglected in the ordinary practice of medicine.

II. Concerning the MEDICAL ESTABLISHMENT of the NEW-YORK HOSPITAL.

This spacious, airy, and well-contrived building, is the receptacle of a great number of patients. The accidents attendant on the vast amount of business carried on in this populous place, by land and water, are often so serious as to make the sufferers seek remedy and relief in the Hospital. Sick and wounded of all sorts that occur, are constantly admitted and attended in this **HOUSE OF CHARITY**. The *medical* student here learns the causes and symptoms of diseases—observes their various type and character—listens to the prescription of the physicians—watches the operation of remedies administered—and notes the event of each case. The *chirurgical* student attends to the appearances which wounds, fractures, and other complaints demanding surgical assistance put on—learns to ascertain the exact condition of things—accustoms himself to judge of the expediency of applications—and acquires the knowledge, method, and habit of performing operations, with the manner of dressing and treatment afterwards.

The Physicians of the Hospital, whose practice the students are admitted to attend, are Dr. JOHN R. B. RODGERS, SAMUEL L. MITCHILL, Esq. Dr. ELIHU H. SMITH, and Dr. DAVID HOSACK. The charge of the medical patients is committed to these four gentlemen, who attend the Hospital, two and two alternately.

The members of the surgical department, from whom the students learn the details and operations of surgery, are WRIGHT POST, Esq. Dr. RICHARD S. KISSAM, Dr. SAMUEL BORROWE, and Dr. VALENTINE SEAMAN. The surgeons attend after the manner of the physicians.

Besides the opportunities of practical information which the ordinary business of the Hospital affords, there is yet further instruction to be derived from the lectures delivered at the bed-side, or on the cases of persons actually sick. By an appointment of the Faculty of Physic in Columbia College, Dr. RODGERS is Clinical Lecturer in the New-York Hospital; and the objects of this course are such medical cases occurring in the Hospital as, from their nature or importance, are particularly worthy the attention of the students. These are in the first place selected by the teacher—regular histories of them are recorded, and the progress of their symptoms daily reported in presence of the students. These in due time become the subject of lectures, in which the characteristic signs of diseases, the indications of cure, the effect of remedies, and every circumstance relative to them are discussed.

In addition to all this, a handsome and well-arranged library is established in the Hospital. A considerable number of the latest and more valuable publications on medical and chirurgical subjects are already purchased and deposited there. To this students are admitted upon such very easy and accommodating terms, that an industrious reader may, without any expence of money to buy books, have access to an elegant and instructive collection of such as appertain to his profession, and the branches of knowledge connected with it.

The *College* and the *Hospital* of New-York, as they are in perfect harmony, and co-operate in public-spirited measures, may be considered fairly as forming, upon the whole, *one of the best schools of physic and surgery* that students can visit.

An ORDINANCE

*For conferring the Degree of Doctor of Medicine in
Columbia College.*

BE it ordained by the Trustees of Columbia College, and it is hereby ordained by the authority of the same, that the following shall be the order and regulations for conferring the Degree of Doctor of Medicine in this College:—

1. No person shall be admitted to an examination for the Degree of Doctor of Medicine until he shall have attained to the age of twenty-one years.
2. No person shall have the Degree of Doctor of Medicine conferred on him, but on the first Tuesday of May, or second Tuesday of November.
3. No person shall be admitted as a Candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Medicine, unless he shall have studied Medicine for three years, in this or some other College or University, and shall have attended at least one complete course of all the Medical Lectures in this College, viz. Anatomy, Chemistry, Practice of Physic, Midwifery, Materia Medica, Institutes of Medicine, Botany, Surgery, and a course of Clinical Lectures in the Hospital of this city.
4. Any Student of Medicine, who shall have complied with the preceding regulations, and is desirous of obtaining a Degree, must apply to the Dean of the Medical Faculty, at least three months before the usual time of conferring degrees; and, as soon as it is convenient, he shall be informed when, and at what place, he may be admitted to his first examination, which shall be kept secret, unless the Candidate should acquit himself to the satisfaction of the Faculty.

5. The Candidate shall, before the 20th of March, or 20th of September, write a Dissertation upon some medical subject, in the Latin, French, or English languages; which shall be submitted to the inspection and correction of one of the Professors, who, having affixed his *Perlegi, et imprimatur*, and signed his name thereunto, the Candidate shall be then admitted to his *Secundum* examination.

6. On the first of April or October, the Candidate shall again submit to an examination, before the Faculty, on the different branches of Medicine.

7. The Candidate, having thus far acquitted himself to the satisfaction of the Faculty, shall have an aphorism from Hippocrates, and a medical question given him—upon the former of which he shall write an essay, and to the latter an answer, and shall be examined, upon both, on the 10th of April, or 10th of October, before the Faculty.

8. If the Candidate shall have thus far answered satisfactorily, he shall have assigned him two histories of diseases, accompanied with pertinent questions, on which he shall comment, and to which he shall reply in writing; and on the 20th of April, or 20th of October, he shall submit to be examined on them, before the Faculty.

9. After the above examinations, if the Medical Faculty are satisfied as to the merits of the Candidate, he shall print, at his own expence, the first-mentioned dissertation, and shall deliver, before the 23d of April, or 23d of October, to the Dean of the Faculty, twelve copies.

10. On the first Tuesday of May, or second Tuesday of November, he shall be publicly examined in the College-hall, upon the doctrines contained in his Thesis; and, having acquitted himself to the satisfaction of the Faculty, he shall be admitted to the Degree of Doctor of Medicine.

¶ The Lectures on Chemistry, Anatomy, Theory and Practice of Physic, Midwifery, and Clinical Lectures, commence on the first Monday in November, yearly; excepting that for this season, Dr. MITCHILL, on account of attending the Legislature at Albany, next winter, as a Member of Assembly, will commence the Lectures on Chemistry, &c. near the end of September.

The Lectures on Botany and Materia Medica commence about the 15th of May, yearly.

New-York, July 4, 1797.

The Lectures on Chemistry, Anatomy, Theory and Practice of Physic, Midwifery, and Clinical Lectures commence on the ~~first~~ ^{second} Monday in November yearly! Dr. Strightham is now Lecturer on Chemistry in the place of Doctor Mitchill who has been removed.

August 10th 1805





Med. Hist

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